

# MISSOURI CONSERVATIONIST

VOLUME 79, ISSUE 3, MARCH 2018  
SERVING NATURE & YOU







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# Contents

MARCH 2018  
VOLUME 79, ISSUE 3



## FEATURES

### 10 The Kindest Care

Focus your love for wildlife on improving habitat and preventing conflicts.

by Bonnie Chasteen

### 16 Nature Staycations

MDC's regional media specialists share their top picks for getting into nature without going far away.

by MDC media specialists

### 22 The Best Woman for the Job

MDC seeks qualified women to serve as agents.

by Kristie Hilgedick



## DEPARTMENTS

- 2 Inbox
- 3 Up Front With Sara Parker Pauley
- 4 Nature Lab
- 5 In Brief
- 28 Get Outside
- 30 Places To Go
- 32 Wild Guide
- 33 Outdoor Calendar



Eastern redbud

## MISSOURI CONSERVATIONIST



### ON THE COVER

A young eastern cottontail rabbit peeks outside its nest in early spring.

**NOPPADOL PAOTHONG**

100mm macro lens  
f/4, 1/160 sec, ISO 800

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# Inbox



## Letters to the Editor

Submissions reflect readers' opinions and may be edited for length and clarity. Email [Magazine@mdc.mo.gov](mailto:Magazine@mdc.mo.gov) or write to us:

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## ANNUAL REVIEW

Learned so much reading the January 2018 issue of *Missouri Conservationist*.

Cheryl Whatley  
via Facebook

## ANNUAL REVIEW

The January issue literally had me happy crying. Elk herds are recovering, and 91 percent of adult elk cows were found to be pregnant. More than half of the yearling cows were also pregnant. Black bears are making a comeback. Our wetlands are recovering and aiding in the recovery of marsh birds. Prairie-chickens are making a comeback. Feral hog numbers are down, and chronic wasting disease in deer is being held at bay. Not to mention, we are feeding people in need through Share the Harvest, where hunters donate meat from their hunts. This is what I'm hoping to see nationwide. To anyone who cares about conservation, this is great, joyous news. Great job, Missouri Department of Conservation!

Myrna Elise Fridley via Facebook

I just read the January issue with the annual report [Page 11]. Do not let anyone or any state say or think that Missourians do not care enough or are not willing to commit the resources for wildlife conservation. In comparison, Missouri is light years ahead of other states in this regard, and Missourians are entitled to the credit and the respect for our efforts and accomplishments.

Joseph B. Gibbs, PE Columbia

## MIGHTY MONARCH

For several years, I have let volunteer milkweeds grow. This year, we had a great hatching. It was a great sight to see the small monarchs flying around in my flower garden. What a thrill!

Wanda Teter Fayette

## GIGGING

Many thanks to Mr. Blake Stephens and Mr. Jim Wiggs and family for what they are doing for our youth [January, Page 8]. We, too, have introduced numerous youth to gigging.

Junior McSwain Ava



Eastern screech-owl

## SCREECH-OWLS

I enjoyed February's *Missouri Conservationist*, especially the article about owls [Page 16]. Went on a fishing trip to Canada years ago. We hired a guide, who mimicked a barred owl in broad daylight and got a reply back. I started calling after dark. After the third or fourth call, we heard a fast flapping of wings as the owl landed in the tree right above our cottage. Enjoy your great magazine!

Gary and Gina DeHaven via email

One glance at the cover of the February issue brought back memories when I was a research biologist with the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service at Patuxent Wildlife Research Center in Maryland. I was involved in research using a large colony of captive eastern screech-owls on the effects of environmental contaminants. I recall occasionally receiving slight wounds to the back of my head from their needle-sharp talons. I greatly enjoy your excellent magazine. Keep up the good work.

Stanley Wiemeyer St. Joseph

## PRAISE FOR THE CONSERVATIONIST

Every time I receive a copy of your magazine, I read it from start to finish, particularly the photos. Well done! In my youth, I hunted and fished, but after my service in the Army, I stopped hunting and only "catch and release," taking great care to return the fish in pristine condition so someone else can have the thrill and pleasure of the catch. Thank you again for all your efforts. Man needs the balance between the city and nature, and your efforts go a long way in keeping that balance.

Harry McClure via email

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## Have a Question for a Commissioner?

Send a note using our online contact form at [mdc.mo.gov/commissioners](http://mdc.mo.gov/commissioners).

JIM RATHER





### Want to see your photos in the Missouri Conservationist?

Share your photos on Flickr at  
[flickr.com/groups/mdcreaderphotos-2018/](https://www.flickr.com/groups/mdcreaderphotos-2018/),  
email [Readerphoto@mdc.mo.gov](mailto:Readerphoto@mdc.mo.gov),  
or include the hashtag #mdcdiscovernature  
on your Instagram photos.



1

1 | Bumble bee by  
[Bruce Paneitz](#), via email

2 | Raccoon by  
[Dave\\_Adams\\_Images](#),  
via Instagram

3 | Rue Anemone by  
[D Tyler](#), via Flickr



2



3

### MISSOURI CONSERVATION COMMISSIONERS



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Murphy



# Up Front

with Sara Parker Pauley

✕ Oh, the complexity of March! Not yet sure if she is winter or spring, one day warm and sunny, the next day cold and gray, we're left wondering how best to navigate Mother Nature in order to get outdoors and shake the wintery chill from our bones. But with spring, comes the much-anticipated event for anglers — the March 1 trout opener. I love each of the four trout parks with their uniqueness of character and the passionate anglers so loyal to each one. I'm fortunate to see the season opener from Roaring River State Park this year, and as a serious coffee drinker, I'm always grateful to the Cassville Chamber of Commerce volunteers who deliver hot java to chilled anglers lining the stream banks. The closing of schools for this annual pilgrimage, including the busing of young anglers to the park for opening day, pulls at my Ozark-heritage heartstrings.

I also love the stretches of Missouri streams hosting wild trout. Last year, my husband and I, along with some friends, headed to Newburg, south of Rolla, to fish a stretch of Mill Creek for a remnant strain of the famed McCloud River Red-band Trout. In the crystal-clear water, we found the trout to be elusive and shy, but we finally managed to catch a few that day.

While I've traveled far and wide, exploring wild Missouri remains at the top of my list. There is nothing better than an outdoor adventure close to home, especially to unwind from busy lives and hectic schedules (see the nature staycation ideas on Page 16). Missouri proves to me over and over again that close-to-home adventures are far from ordinary!

*Sara Parker Pauley*

**SARA PARKER PAULEY**, DIRECTOR  
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The *Missouri Conservationist* (ISSN 0026-6515) is the official monthly publication of the Missouri Department of Conservation, 2901 West Truman Boulevard, Jefferson City, MO (Mailing address: PO Box 180, Jefferson City, MO 65102.) **SUBSCRIPTIONS:** Visit [mdc.mo.gov/conmag](http://mdc.mo.gov/conmag), or call 573-522-4115, ext. 3856 or 3249. Free to adult Missouri residents (one per household); out of state \$7 per year; out of country \$10 per year. Notification of address change must include both old and new address (send mailing label with the subscriber number on it) with 60-day notice. Preferred periodical postage paid at Jefferson City, Missouri, and at additional entry offices. **Postmaster:** Send correspondence to Circulation, PO Box 180, Jefferson City, MO 65102-0180. Phone: 573-522-4115, ext. 3856 or 3249. Copyright © 2018 by the Conservation Commission of the State of Missouri.

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[mdc.mo.gov](http://mdc.mo.gov) 3

# Nature LAB

by Bonnie Chasteen

Each month, we highlight research MDC uses to improve fish, forest, and wildlife management.

## RESOURCE SCIENCE

### Making Ecological Data Useful

✳ One morning in 2015, Ivan Vining got a call from Jasmine Batten, an MDC deer biologist.

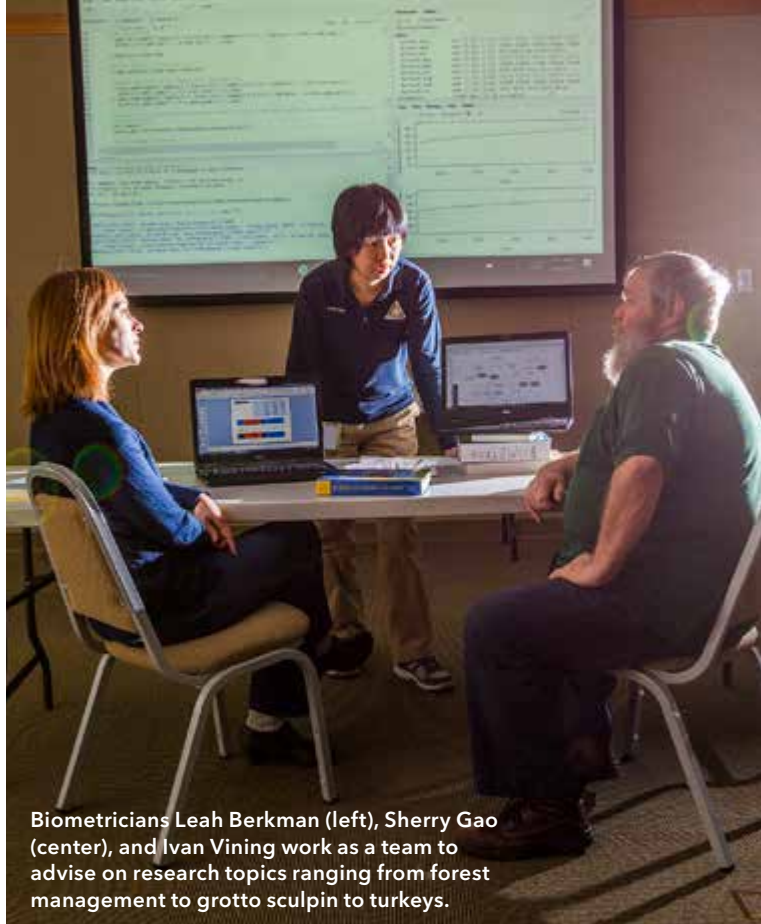
"We've found a CWD positive in Franklin County," she said. "How soon can you get me a reliable sampling goal?"

"Give me a few hours," Vining said and started writing code. A few hours later, he sent Batten the number: about 300. Chronic wasting disease (CWD) is fatal to deer, and Vining's work helped Batten's team determine the sampling goal, or the number of deer to cull to keep the disease from spreading.

Vining has extensive training and experience in designing mark-recapture studies, in which animals are captured, marked, and released, for population analysis. He is one of three biometricians who work for MDC. As biometricians, Vining, Leah Berkman (a geneticist) and Sherry Gao (a statistician) help ensure the reliability and define the scope of the information MDC can get from its statistical analyses and research efforts.

"We translate biology and natural processes into mathematical concepts that you can work with," Berkman said. Vining agreed. "We make ecological data useful."

Batten's call is just one of many requests biometricians



Biometricians Leah Berkman (left), Sherry Gao (center), and Ivan Vining work as a team to advise on research topics ranging from forest management to grotto sculpin to turkeys.

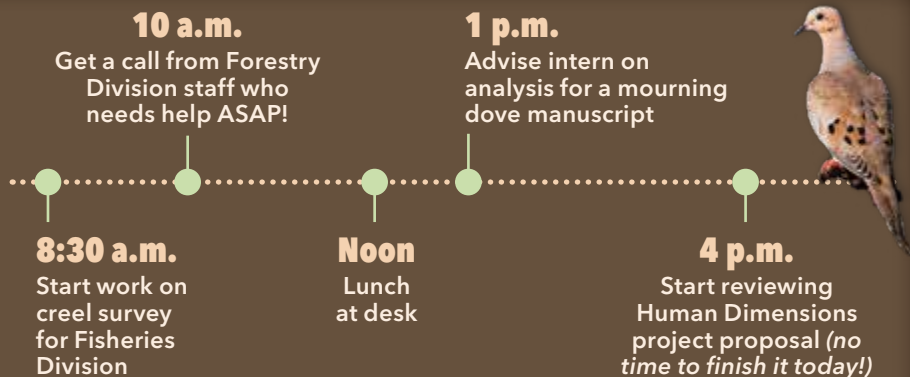
Biometricians help ensure the quality of MDC's research methods and results

may receive throughout a typical workday. Aside from responding to field requests for analysis, MDC's biometricians advise on the design and methods of staff research proposals. In a given year, they may advise on 18–30 proposals on topics ranging from plants to fish to wildlife. They also advise adjoining states, which may not have staff biometricians.

Sometimes, the biometricians join other resource scientists in the field, but most days, they're at their computers, crunching data. "We enjoy the satisfaction of writing code, pressing enter, and getting an answer," Berkman said.



### A Recent Workday in the Life of Biometrician Sherry Gao





# In Brief

News and updates from MDC



A black bear  
searches for food.

## BE BEAR AWARE

LEARN MORE ABOUT  
MISSOURI'S BLACK BEARS  
AND RESEARCH UPDATES  
AT NEW WEBSITE

➔ MDC recently launched a new website all about black bears in Missouri. Browse research summaries and updates, photos, videos, interactive story maps, and more at [short.mdc.mo.gov/ZTb](https://short.mdc.mo.gov/ZTb).

"The new story maps show interesting black bear movements, such as how far a bear can disperse, and maps of our collared bears," said MDC Furbearer Biologist Laura Conlee.

Conlee added that spring is the time when black bears emerge from their winter dens and start searching for food, including from people. She encourages you to be bear aware and not feed them.

"Feeding bears makes them lose their natural fear of humans, and teaches them to see humans as food providers," Conlee explained. "A bear that has gotten used to getting food from humans may become aggressive and dangerous. When this happens, the bear must be destroyed. Remember: A fed bear is a dead bear."

Learn more about being Bear Aware at [mdc.mo.gov/BearAware](https://mdc.mo.gov/BearAware).



### TWO-HEADED SNAKE AT SHEPHERD OF THE HILLS HATCHERY

The thousands of rainbow trout housed at Shepherd of the Hills Hatchery may have to take a temporary backseat to one very unique-looking reptile: a two-headed young western ratsnake.

Found by curious teenager Terry Lowery last October under the deck of his family's home in Hurley in Stone County, the snake is on display at the hatchery's conservation center.

Polycephaly, the condition of having more than one head, is extremely rare throughout the animal kingdom, but it occurs more frequently in snakes than in other animals. In most documented cases, two-headed snakes have lived only a few months, but some live full lives in captivity and even reproduce. They include a two-headed western ratsnake found in 2005 on display at the Cape Girardeau Conservation Nature Center in southeast Missouri.

Get directions and more information about the hatchery at [short.mdc.mo.gov/Zk7](http://short.mdc.mo.gov/Zk7). For more information about the Cape Girardeau Nature Center, visit [short.mdc.mo.gov/ZT9](http://short.mdc.mo.gov/ZT9).

### WILD WEBCAST ON FERAL HOGS

Get the latest on what MDC and our partners are doing to combat feral hogs Wednesday, March 21, from noon to 1 p.m. during Wild Webcast: Feral Hogs. Mark McLain,

feral hog elimination team leader, and Alan Leary, wildlife management coordinator, will share updates and provide background on these destructive animals and why they are a problem for landowners and others. Register at [short.mdc.mo.gov/ZTn](http://short.mdc.mo.gov/ZTn).

To watch previous MDC Wild Webcasts, visit [short.mdc.mo.gov/ZTX](http://short.mdc.mo.gov/ZTX).



## Ask MDC

**Got a Question for Ask MDC?**

Send it to [AskMDC@mdc.mo.gov](mailto:AskMDC@mdc.mo.gov)  
or call 573-522-4115, ext. 3848.

**Q: Can you please tell me what kind of snake this is? My daughter and I were walking near a creek when I spotted it.**

➔ This is a midland brownsnake — a small, secretive species that prefers a moist environment.

Midland brownsnakes range in color from gray-brown to reddish-brown, with a white or yellowish belly. Each snake has a distinct tan stripe bordered by two rows of small, dark-brown spots. The top of the head is usually dark. Adults range in length from 9 to 13 inches.

Brownsnakes eat earthworms, slugs, land snails, and soft-bodied insects. One study found their diet was 75 percent slugs and 25 percent earthworms. Other researchers suggest the blunt head and elongated teeth of this snake helps it grip and tug persistently on a snail's body until the snail tires and can be pulled from its shell.

**Q: Do gray wolves live in Missouri?**

➔ Although gray wolves once ranged across several continents, including North America, you're not likely to see one in Missouri.

The gray wolf (*Canis lupus*), also known as the timber wolf, is listed as extirpated, or



Midland brownsnake

eliminated, from Missouri and seven surrounding states.

Individual wolves occasionally wander into Missouri from other states, particularly the upper Midwest. Since 2001, three gray wolves, probably from the Great Lakes states, have been confirmed in Missouri. (The one discovered in 2001 was wearing a radio collar and ear tag linking it to Michigan's Upper Peninsula, more than 600 miles away.)

Although apparently secure globally, the gray wolf is a federally endangered species in much of the United States south of Interstate 80, including Missouri.

Wolves are protected as an endangered species in much of the U.S., including Missouri.

**Q: I took these photos on a rock bluff along Truman Lake. It appears to be lichen, but I'm having trouble identifying it.**





Liverwort

### The leaves are 1 to 2 inches long. Can you please help me?

➔ Although this specimen appears to be a lichen, it's actually a liverwort, possibly *Preissia quadrata*, which often features dark-purple edges and tends to grow on vertical rock surfaces.

It is estimated that 9,000 species of liverworts are found on the planet. Considered plants, some of the more familiar ones grow flattened and leafless — such as the one you discovered — but most species are leafy with a form very much like a

flattened moss.

Liverworts are nonvascular, which means they lack the structures needed to transport water, nutrients, and sugars between the roots and the leaves. Instead, they rely on simpler tissues specialized for internal transport of water.

Thallose liverworts — which are branching, like this one — grow commonly on moist soil or damp rocks. Lacking stems and leaves, their main body is flat like a green pancake, often with lobes resembling the thumb of a mitten.

## AGENT ADVICE

from

**Zebulon Jordan**

ST. CLAIR COUNTY  
CONSERVATION AGENT

Snagging season for paddlefish, the state's official aquatic animal, opens March 15. Before you take to the water in search of this ancestral fish species, keep these tips in mind to increase your chances of success. Concentrate on deep holes in rivers and staging areas in the lakes until the water temperature rises and flow increases. Statewide, legal-sized paddlefish must be at least 24 inches from the eye to the fork of the tail. If you are on Truman Lake, Lake of the Ozarks, Table Rock Lake, or any of their tributaries, paddlefish must be at least 34 inches. The head and tail must remain attached to paddlefish while on the water or banks thereof. Snagging paddlefish or operating a boat while snagging requires a valid fishing license. The daily limit is two paddlefish.

For more information, visit [short.mdc.mo.gov/ZTz](http://short.mdc.mo.gov/ZTz).



## What IS it?

Can you guess this month's natural wonder?

The answer is on Page 9.





# WE ARE CONSERVATION

Spotlight on  
people and partners

## Ukko Devos

An Eagle Scout from Union, Devos enjoys taking on outdoor projects that improve the environment. His career goal is to become a park ranger.

➔ In 2016, he approached MDC Wildlife Damage Biologist Tom Meister for projects he could do to qualify for the William T. Hornaday medal, a coveted scouting award that recognizes outstanding efforts to conserve natural resources.

### He Took the Lead

"Ukko jumped right in," Meister said. "He got 15 people, many of them from his scout troop, to help him pull nearly 50 old tires out of the Bourbeuse River." This stream is habitat for the winged mapleleaf, an endangered freshwater mussel. Devos also led a project to stabilize the streambank with tree-plantings, Meister said.

### In His Own Words

"If you care about conservation, go and talk to people who work at MDC or parks. See if there's anything you can do to help."

by Cliff White



What's **your** conservation superpower?



## DEER SEASON RESULTS

Missouri's 2017-2018 deer-hunting season ended with a total harvest of 283,940, an increase from the 2016-2017, which saw 263,834 deer harvested. Top counties included Howell with 6,182 deer harvested, Franklin with 5,957, and Texas with 5,619.

→ Conservation makes Missouri a great place to hunt. Get more information at [huntfish.mdc.mo.gov](http://huntfish.mdc.mo.gov).



## GET READY FOR TROUT OPENER

March 1 marks the opening of catch-and-keep trout fishing at Missouri's four trout parks: Bennett Spring State Park near Lebanon, Montauk State Park near Licking, Roaring River State Park near Cassville, and Maramec Spring Park near St. James. The catch-and-keep season at the trout parks runs through Oct. 31.

MDC operates trout hatcheries at all four parks. For each of the 2,000 anglers expected at every hatchery on opening day, staff stocks about three 1-foot-long fish and some large lunkers ranging from 3-10 pounds. We also stock trout daily at each park throughout the season.

For more information, visit [short.mdc.mo.gov/Z5r](http://short.mdc.mo.gov/Z5r).

## PADDLEFISH SEASON OPENS MARCH 15

Missouri's annual spring paddlefish snagging season for Lake of the Ozarks, Truman Lake, Table Rock Lake, and most other waters in the state runs March 15 through April 30. The season for the Mississippi River is March 15 through May 15, with a fall season from Sept. 15 through Dec. 15.

MDC makes paddlefish snagging possible in the Show-Me State through annual stockings of tens of thousands of paddlefish fingerlings raised at Blind Pony Hatchery near Sweet Springs. The fingerlings are released into Lake of the Ozarks, Truman Lake, and Table Rock Lake, as well as the Black River. The annual stocking is necessary because dams and other barriers to spawning areas have eliminated sustainable natural reproduction in the lakes.

For more information about paddlefishing in Missouri, visit [short.mdc.mo.gov/ZTC](http://short.mdc.mo.gov/ZTC).

## What IS it?

### NEOSHO MUCKET

One of approximately 69 species of native mussels in Missouri, the Neosho mucket is found exclusively in small to medium streams in the Neosho River system in southwest Missouri. This mussel prefers stream bottoms with gravel or a mixture of gravel and sand. The outside shell is yellow to tan with broad green rays or chevrons, while the inside is bluish-white to white and slightly iridescent. The Neosho mucket can grow up to 5 inches long.

*Photograph by Noppadol Paothong*







I am not an orphan —  
just waiting for Mom to  
come back.

PHOTOGRAPH BY  
NOPPADOL PAOTHONG





# THE *Kindest* CARE

FOCUS YOUR LOVE  
FOR WILDLIFE ON  
IMPROVING HABITAT AND  
PREVENTING CONFLICTS

by Bonnie Chasteen

**It's spring** and wobbly-legged fawns are following their moms through woods and across busy roads. Often this time of year, wild babies get separated from their parents, temporarily or forever. What do you do if you find a wild youngster alone? For a lot of folks, that's a tough question.



## We're Coded to Care

Babies of all sorts are cute and vulnerable, which explains why we humans can hardly resist taking them in. We are programmed to love and protect them, especially those we perceive to be orphans.

State Wildlife Veterinarian Sherri Russell understands how we feel. “Missourians care about wildlife, and that’s a great thing.” But, she says, most “orphans” aren’t really orphans. “Taking them in keeps them from their parents, who are usually in the woods not far away.”

## Bottle-Fed Fawns Become Fearless Bucks

Russell said that adopting wildlife usually ends badly for the animal, the adopter, or both.

Lone fawns in particular are commonly mistaken for orphans. “People find them curled up in the grass, and they think their mother has abandoned them,” Russell said. “In fact, the mother is usually close by, watching you pick up her baby and take it away.”

Once adopted, fawns soon become imprinted on humans, meaning they lose their fear and depend on people for food, water, and shelter. “This makes it impossible for them to be returned to the wild,” Russell said.

Shannon Ohrenberg, one of Greene County’s conservation agents, described a fairly common situation that ends in heartache for both adopters and the agency. Someone takes in a cute little fawn. They bottle feed it and spend time with it. Then, as the deer continues to grow, they open the gate and let it wander free, feeling like they have done the deer a great service. The young buck now has no fear of people. It may walk up and nuzzle people or follow them around. Then the rut occurs, and the “tame” deer starts chasing people around the neighborhood, destroying property, and trying to break through glass doors.

“We obviously end up having to put it down for public safety,” Ohrenberg said. “I just hate this. It makes me really sad.”

“For their sake and yours,” she said, “please leave fawns where you find them. In most cases, the mother will come back for them.”



Baby eastern cottontail rabbits



### When to Call an Agent

In most cases, MDC recommends you leave wildlife where you find it. But you should always call your county conservation agent if you find a bald eagle that is dead, injured, or unable to fly. This helps MDC comply with the federal Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act. For your own safety, DO NOT touch or try to catch a live bald eagle.



Young bald eagles



Baby purple martins

Most “orphans” aren’t really orphans. Taking animals in keeps them from their parents, who are usually not far away.



Bobwhite quail chick

### Wild Babies Can Make Your Family Sick

If you’re a Facebook user, you’ve probably seen videos of cute baby raccoons cuddling with kids and pets. These videos get lots of likes, adoring comments, and shares.

Russell is not a fan. “These videos concern me,” she said. “Raccoons carry *Baylisascaris procyonis*, a kind of gut worm that can infect your dog or your kids. Once inside the victim’s body, it travels to the brain and can cause blindness, coma, or death.”

She explained that the parasite persists in raccoon feces, which can cling indefinitely to surfaces like floors and toys. “Given kids’ tendency to put their hands and toys in their mouths, it’s not hard to see how infection can occur.” She emphasized that no confirmed *Baylisascaris* infections have ever been reported in Missouri, but more cases have turned up in the last couple of years, especially in the South.

“Most folks really just want to help wildlife however they can,” Russell said. “But they also need to be aware of the risks to themselves and their families when they take wild animals inside their homes.”

### What You Can Do to Really Help Wildlife

Like us, wild animals love their freedom. They need plenty of food, appropriate homes, and suitable mates. When things are just right, they find all these in their natural habitat. Most of Missouri’s land is privately owned, so that means wildlife depend on our properties for places to live and raise their young. Wherever you live in the Show-Me State, you can do a little something to help the wildlife



stay wild, stay safe, and stay connected to others like them.

### Get to know what lives on your land

Your property can be a powerful force for conservation. Your trees harbor songbirds, and your yard or pasture supports a multitude of birds, mammals, and reptiles. If you can, delay mowing and burning until after wildlife have fledged and dispersed. Get to know your wildlife neighbors and avoid disturbing them when they're breeding and nesting. As Agent Ohrenberg said, "This will save you trying to give inappropriate food to orphaned baby bunnies."

For more info about Missouri's natural communities, see the sidebar Who Lives Near You?

### Provide native habitat

Houses, developments, and roads can keep many kinds of wildlife, especially reptiles and amphibians, from finding food, mates, and shelter. It's hard to connect habitat islands — land that is isolated by development — but you can enrich any available land, such as a backyard or a private roadside, for wildlife like mammals and birds. Planting native trees, shrubs, and wildflowers provides food and natural cover as wildlife go about the business of finding mates and raising families.



What kinds of native trees and plants should you choose? That depends on where in the state you live. In the rolling hills of north Missouri, good choices are trees like oaks and hickories, native grasses like big bluestem and Indian grass, and wildflowers like milkweeds, blazing stars, and coneflowers. If you live in or near historically forested areas, consider a range of hardwoods, understory trees like dogwood and serviceberry, shrubs like spicebush and fragrant sumac, and flowers like

**Make your property a powerful force for conservation with native plants and water features.**

celandine poppy, Virginia bluebells, and trillium. If you live along a river or stream, use willows, buttonbush, and sedges to keep banks stable and provide wildlife places to forage, hide, and nest.

For more information about using Missouri's native plants to enrich wildlife habitat on your rural land, get in touch



Prothonotary warbler with nestlings

### Who Lives Near You?

If you're internet savvy, you have several convenient ways to track the wildlife that lives in your neck of the woods and to learn more about the different kinds of habitat they need to thrive.

First, using apps like **iNaturalist.org** encourages you to notice nearby wildlife and report sightings of those you care about. For example, the Saint Louis Zoo's Turtle Road Watch project asks people to use iNaturalist to report sightings of turtles crossing roads. "Adding observations to the iNaturalist map helps us identify areas of concern," said Michael Dawson, the zoo's conservation education liaison. "Turtles are in serious trouble worldwide, and individual

efforts can go a long way toward helping conserve Missouri's native turtles."

Another online resource that helps Missourians learn more about the many kinds of natural communities our state's wildlife depend on is **mdc.mo.gov/habitats**. Explore this deep well of information, photos, and maps to discover the differences between habitats like forests, woodlands, and glades or fens, wetlands, and marshes. "It's the amazing diversity of our state's natural communities that gives rise to all the different kinds of wild animals and plants that we love to see and enjoy," said MDC's Habitat Management Coordinator Nathan Muenks.





with your county's private land conservationist. Visit [mdc.mo.gov/contact](http://mdc.mo.gov/contact), or call your regional office (see Page 2). Grow Native!, a program of the Missouri Prairie Foundation, is another great source of information and professional help for using native plants in your home landscape. Visit [grownative.org](http://grownative.org) to learn more.

### Be careful driving, and give wildlife a brake

In the spring, many wildlife are searching for mates or places to nest. According to Missouri State Herpetologist Jeff Briggler, most of the turtles you see crossing the road in the spring are young male box turtles looking for mates or females looking for places to bury their eggs. He advises giving them a brake if you safely can, and, if it's safe for you to do so, consider helping them across the road.

For more ideas about helping Missouri's turtles, like this three-toed box turtle, see the sidebar Who Lives Near You?



### Prevent Bird Strikes

An easy way to keep birds from crashing into large windows is to hang simple, lightweight "wind curtains" made of parachute cords in front of them. This dulls reflections and breaks up the illusion of clear passage. Learn more at [birdsavers.com/buildyourown-allparacord.html](http://birdsavers.com/buildyourown-allparacord.html).

"Carry them in the direction they were headed," Briggler said, "or they may go back to the road."

Throughout the year, lots of wild animals are active at dawn and dusk. In the morning, night foragers are heading to bed, and wildlife that feed during the day are just waking up and starting to move about. Deer, in particular, are active at dawn and dusk, which explains why so many car-deer accidents happen at these times. If your commute has you driving as the sun rises or sets, be especially cautious. Keep an eye on the ditches and slow down if you see a deer because more are bound to follow.

### Don't attract wildlife close to your home, pets, or livestock

Wildlife, such as deer, rabbits, ground-hogs, skunks, squirrels, raccoons, foxes, coyotes, and black bears, are often attracted to our yards and neighborhoods. That's because they enjoy eating the same things we do. If you garden or feed the birds (or your pets or livestock) near a wooded area, you will attract many of these critters.

To minimize conflicts — which can lead to nuisance control measures, possibly leaving behind vulnerable young — avoid tempting wildlife with



### Garbage, pet food, and greasy grills can tempt wildlife.

food, water, or cover. Fence your garden and beehives, and take in pet food at night. Don't leave out a greasy, smelly grill, and avoid keeping chickens near the woods. If you feed the birds, consider taking your feeders down from June through October, when they have plenty of native seeds, nuts, fruits, and insects to eat. This will remove temptation from raccoons, deer, bears, and other wildlife.

What's the difference between habitat and handouts? Native plants and fruits. If it's meant for your table, pet, or livestock, keep wildlife away from it, if possible.

We can't be blamed for wanting to rescue wildlife, especially if it seems orphaned or injured. We are, after all, coded to care. But remember that wild animals *are* wild. They need people, especially in a state like Missouri that's mostly private land, to learn more about their needs, care for their habitat, and prevent conflicts with them. That's the kindest care, and it will make us — and them — feel good about sharing the places we call home, all year long. ▲

*Bonnie Chasteen is the Conservationist's associate editor. She enjoys landscaping with native plants, feeding the birds, and helping turtles across the road.*





BURR OAK FAMILY, BARRED OWL: NOPPADOL PHOTHONG



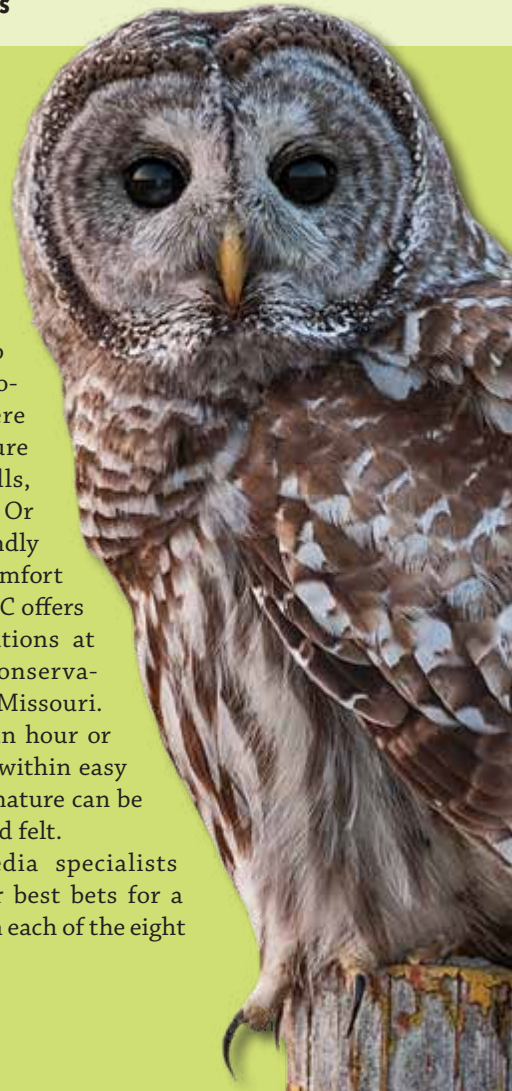
# Nature Staycations

MDC'S REGIONAL MEDIA SPECIALISTS  
SHARE THEIR TOP PICKS FOR GETTING  
INTO NATURE WITHOUT GOING FAR AWAY

**By MDC media specialists**

The summer months are often a time to gather family and friends, hit the road, and enjoy a relaxing vacation. But what if that vacation turned into a staycation — a close-to-home adventure where you could explore nature among woodlands, hills, mountains, or marshes? Or browse indoor, kid-friendly nature exhibits in the comfort of air-conditioning? MDC offers fun staycation destinations at nature centers and conservation areas throughout Missouri. Whether you visit for an hour or a day, MDC has a place within easy driving distance where nature can be seen, touched, heard, and felt.

MDC's regional media specialists have put together their best bets for a staycation destination in each of the eight regions of the state.



The trails at Burr Oak Woods Nature Center in Blue Springs are a good place to spot wildlife like the barred owl.





## Kansas City Region: Burr Oak Woods Nature Center and Conservation Area

Kansas City Regional Media Specialist Bill Graham is a big fan of Burr Oak Woods Nature Center and Conservation Area in Blue Springs.

"You can step into a shady forest, hike among the wildflowers and grasses in a restored prairie meadow, or see fish from a turtle's viewpoint," Graham said.

Burr Oak Woods has six hiking trails. Two loops are paved and easily accessible; the other four are rustic, but all are scenic. Hikers can spend a day or more traversing all the trails. Be alert — these trails are a good place to spot wildlife, including deer and turkeys.

After a hike, stop in the nature center. Visitors will find native fish swimming in a 3,000-gallon aquarium. Interpretive displays explain conservation and nature. Several exhibits are child friendly, mixing education and play.

## Northwest Region: Poosey Conservation Area

Poosey Conservation Area (CA) offers fishing and hiking amid a variety of habitats. Included within the area's 5,863-acres are two lakes, nine ponds, trails, forests, restored grasslands, and old crop fields that support a wide variety of fish and wildlife.

Nine ponds on the area also offer fishing for bass, catfish, and bluegill. Indian Creek Lake and Pike's Lake offer good fishing, and both lakes have boat ramps. Indian Creek Lake also has a dock and a fishing-cleaning station. Primitive campsites, picnic areas, and a pavilion are available.

Poosey CA has designated trails open to both hiking and bicycling. The Green Hills Trail is designed for mountain biking. Some trails are also open for equestrian use.

"Poosey is also a good place for birding," Graham said. "Visitors can watch for wildlife, such as deer and turkeys, while hiking or driving along area roads. Wildflowers and ferns common to hardwood forests can be found on the steep, wooded hillsides, especially in spring."



Poosey CA's lakes offer good fishing. The trails offer opportunities for finding wildflowers like this wild sweet William.



BURR OAK WOODS: DAVID STONER; WILD SWEET WILLIAM: NOPPADOL PAOTIONG; POOSEY CA: LARRY ARCHER





## Ozark Region: Caney Mountain Conservation Area

Candice Davis, media specialist for the southeast and Ozark regions, is most impressed with the grand vistas at Caney Mountain Conservation Area.

The nearly 8,000-acre area boasts a rough landscape of hills left by an old elevated plateau, and carved out by several streams. Visitors can enjoy views of large peaks, including Bear Cave Mountain, High Rock Mountain, Morrison Knob, Long Bald, and Tater Cave Mountain.

Those who step out of their vehicles to observe the smaller scale beauty of the area will take in the ruggedness of its glades, savannas, and forest openings that are broken up by several creek bottoms. The combination of these various habitats makes Caney Mountain a safe haven for several of Missouri's rare and endangered species, as well as more common wildlife.

This variety in habitats is also the reason Caney Mountain played an important role in wild turkey and white-tailed deer restoration efforts in the 1940s.

"Plan to spend the day exploring," Davis said. "Bring binoculars and bird-watch, hike, or mountain bike on the area's gravel roads and trails."

There are three trail options — the multi-use trail, Long Bald Nature Trail, and Spout Spring Trail — ranging in difficulty from easy to moderate and from 6.5 miles to a half-mile loop. Watch for white-tailed deer, squirrels, wild turkeys, rabbits, and a variety of bird species. Caney Mountain is in the heart of bear country, so be bear aware and keep food and any other tempting items locked away and out of reach of bears.



Roseate spoonbill

## Southeast Region: Otter Slough Conservation Area

When early explorers reached what is now southeast Missouri, they were presented with crossing a seemingly endless expanse of swampland. It was miles on miles of bottomland timber amongst interconnecting sloughs. To get an idea of what that was like, spend a day at Otter Slough Conservation Area in Stoddard County.

Although this 4,866-acre area is managed primarily for migratory and wintering waterfowl, many wading birds, shorebirds, eagles, and wetland mammals make Otter Slough their home. Otter Lake, the 250-acre cypress and tupelo swamp, is a beautiful destination to canoe or kayak. Before visiting, visit [short.mdc.mo.gov/ZST](http://short.mdc.mo.gov/ZST) to ensure there's plenty of water in the lake, as annual draw-downs, usually occurring in July, are used for waterfowl and timber management.

Visitors can fish in Cypress Lake and see 30-inch diameter willow oaks in Bradyville Natural Area. An abundance of waterfowl and wildlife are often seen even from the area's gravel roads. The nature trail provides excellent hiking and wildlife viewing that includes boardwalks through cypress-tupelo swamps. Hiking takes about a half-hour.

"Early summer and fall are best for viewing native plant life, but songbird and waterfowl migrations peak in spring and fall," Davis said. "Otter Slough attracts rare migratory birds because of the unique habitat. Black-bellied whistling ducks visit most summers and the king rail has been spotted with one documented brood. Occasionally, birders have viewed roseate spoonbills and wood storks."







## Southwest Region: Springfield Conservation Nature Center

"If you're looking for a day-trip or an afternoon hike that's rich in nature-viewing opportunities but cheap on the gas tank, look no further than MDC's Springfield Conservation Nature Center in Springfield," said Southwest Region Media Specialist Francis Skalicky.

The Springfield Conservation Nature Center is a small piece of the Ozarks nestled within Springfield's city limits. It's a good place to connect with nature and to learn the importance of conserving it, too.

Visitors can explore the building's exhibit area and experience the sights and sounds of Missouri's natural communities. Relax in the nature center's indoor viewing area and get an intimate look at birds and other wildlife that visit the pond and feeders.

Moving outside the nature center building, explore the 79-acre area by hiking one of six trails that total nearly 3 miles. "Trail users can see Ozark forest, glade, and prairie habitat and also enjoy the beauty of creeks and frontage on Lake Springfield," Skalicky said. "Seeing wildlife is a frequent occurrence — more than 170 species inhabit the area."

## St. Louis Region: August A. Busch Shooting Range and Outdoor Education Center

St. Louis Region Media Specialist Dan Zarlenga knows shooting enthusiasts don't need to travel far to enjoy the benefits of a world-class shooting facility.

The all-new August A. Busch Shooting Range and Outdoor Education Center in St. Charles is now open, replacing the old facility, which was built in the 1970s.

"The new range is completely modern and state of the art," Zarlenga said. "It features 20 shooting stations for handgun and rifles, with movable target positions out to 100 yards, and an additional 15 stations out to 50 yards."

Shotgun shooters will enjoy five trap and skeet overlay fields and two shotgun-patterning lanes.

Firearm shooting is not the only option at the new Busch Range. A static archery range with an elevated platform is also offered, as are broadhead practice pits.

The new range incorporates the most current national shooting range design standards and many other improvements for user convenience, safety, and reduced wait times.

Usage fees are very reasonable — just \$3 for an hour on the rifle/pistol range, which includes paper targets and basic ear and eye protection. That same amount affords shotgun shooters a round of 25 clay birds on the trap and skeet fields. And archers can shoot for free.







## Northeast Region: Union Ridge Conservation Area/Spring Creek Ranch Natural Area

Travel just a half-hour northwest of Kirksville via Highway 6 to Highway D and you'll find yourself in the heart of Union Ridge Conservation Area.

This 8,262-acre tract of public land offers a mosaic of woodlands, grasslands, old fields, prairie, savanna, and forest.

Named for a Civil War-era U.S. Post Office and a ridge on the northern portion of the area, the property was primarily used for grazing cattle until MDC established the area for public use in 1989.

MDC has set aside 1,769-acres in a south-central section of the area called Spring Creek Ranch Natural Area. Once dominated by fescue, years of careful management have returned

this area to a diverse mix of native grasses and wildflowers.

"Visitors can hike through forest and woodlands, wander among short, steep hills mantled in native grasses, and enjoy a rare view of native savanna in Missouri," said Robert Hemmelgarn, media specialist for the northeast and central regions.

The area offers opportunities for primitive camping, lake and pond fishing, deer, turkey, small game, and upland bird hunting, wildlife photography, and bird watching. Audubon Missouri even maintains an interactive list of birds identified on the area at [ebird.org/ebird/hotspot/L342576](http://ebird.org/ebird/hotspot/L342576).

## Central Region: Painted Rock Conservation Area

Just south of Jefferson City in rural Osage County, MDC's Painted Rock Conservation Area rests between Highway 133 and the Osage River.

"Hike the 1.6 mile interpretive Osage Scenic Bluff Trail, a loop that features bluff-top boardwalks and viewing decks and reveals evidence of American Indians from as early as 9,000 years ago," said Hemmelgarn. "One Indian burial cairn along the trail is between 500 and 1,500 years old."

A group of Jefferson City dignitaries bought the property in 1877 and named it the Painted Rock Country Club. MDC purchased the property in 1981 and now manages the area for fish, forest, and wildlife. Clubhouse Lake remains and features lakeside primitive camping.

Explore native bottomland hardwood forests along the Osage River, discover several small, sensitive glade communities (dry, desert-like areas), and a kaleidoscope of wildflowers.

The area provides public access to hunting and fishing opportunities. Proximity to the Osage River offers access to fishing, supporting sunfish, bass, and catfish, as well as nongame species. It also makes this area a convenient put-in or take-out spot for quiet float trips through Missouri's northern reaches of the Ozarks. Watch for eagles, forest birds, and other wildlife along the way. ▲

*MDC's regional media specialists are huge fans of Missouri conservation areas, and they enjoy helping readers discover and enjoy them.*

Discover nature in Missouri on your next vacation! More than 1 million acres of conservation land awaits you. For more information on these or other areas to visit during your next staycation, visit **short.mdc.mo.gov/Z4V**.





the Best

# WOM





# AN

## for the Job

MDC SEEKS  
QUALIFIED  
WOMEN TO SERVE  
AS AGENTS

by Kristie Hilgedick | photographs by David Stonner



"One job, one standard" — the recruitment mantra for MDC's Protection Division — means all agent candidates, male and female, must meet the same standards of excellence to qualify for the job. New recruits Hayley Honeycutt, Sarah Foran, and Crystal Poole say they wouldn't have it any other way.



# What does it take to be a truly outstanding conservation agent?

Many people in the profession would say “a love of the outdoors,” “the willingness to enforce the *Wildlife Code of Missouri* (the *Code*) without fear or favor,” or “an enjoyment of people and the willingness to help them.”

What we know for certain is that you don’t have to be a particular gender to excel in the profession.

Men and women alike have done the job and have done it well. For many young people, pursuing a career as a conservation agent is the perfect way to blend their enjoyment of the outdoors with their interest in law enforcement.

Historically, however, women have been underrepresented in MDC’s Protection Division.

It wasn’t until 1975 that the first female conservation agent, Jill Cooper, was assigned to the Kansas City area. Currently, 19 of MDC’s approximately 197 agents who are peace-officer certified — about 9.6 percent — are women.

Protection Division Chief Larry Yamnitz attributed the low recruitment numbers to a lack of encouragement — something he wants to reverse.

“We’re putting in extra effort to make sure everyone knows they have a chance at doing this job,” he said. “It can be dangerous. But women in law enforcement, across the

country, have shown they can work side by side with men,” he said. “We’ve come a long way. Now our goal is getting people interested in coming to our department.”

Field Chief Randy Doman said Protection Division leaders hope more women will consider resource law enforcement as a viable career choice, with room for upward mobility into leadership roles.

“This job is for everybody,” he said. “The office is wonderful — Missouri’s great outdoors.”

As licensed peace officers of the State of Missouri, conservation agents are charged with enforcing the rules of the *Code* and other state and federal laws. The job can be risky because violators are almost always armed. But most agents will say the benefits — flexible schedules, meeting interesting people, and spending time in Missouri’s most majestic places — outweigh the risks.

Getting the job isn’t easy. In years past, it wasn’t unusual for 1,000 people to apply for 12 open positions.

Accepted applicants become candidates who must pass muster at MDC’s training academy. There, they receive 26 weeks of intense training in all facets of law enforcement and resource management. Those who make the grade win county assignments and become the face of conservation in their communities — enforcing the *Code* and helping the public with issues such as nuisance wildlife and land management. Duties and responsibilities include law enforcement, public relations and education, wildlife management, fisheries management, forest management, and other MDC activities.

For many conservation agents, the job is a calling. Last spring, three women heard that call and joined the 2017 training class.

## What it takes to be an agent

The role of an MDC conservation agent is multifaceted. Not only do agents uphold and enforce the *Code*, they teach hunter safety courses, appear on local media, educate the public, and help with emergency rescues.

To be accepted for training, applicants must meet the following qualifications:

- ➔ Be 21 years old
- ➔ Have a Bachelor of Science degree in forestry, fisheries management, wildlife management, wildlife conservation, natural resources law enforcement, criminal justice, agriculture, education with science or biology emphasis, other related biological sciences, or closely related natural resource subjects
- ➔ Pass MDC’s physical fitness assessment

For more information about the program, visit [mdc.mo.gov/careers](http://mdc.mo.gov/careers).



Conservation agent training consists of 26 weeks of intense instruction. In addition to classroom work, trainees participate in physically demanding practical exercises.







## The Dream of a Lifetime

Serving as a conservation agent has been Sarah Foran's dream since she was 10 years old. That's when a conversation with an agent left her awestruck.

"That uniform was the coolest thing I'd ever seen," she said. "I said to myself: 'I want to wear that uniform, and I want to have that job.'"

From that point on, her every career move has been aimed at achieving that goal.

A graduate of the University of Central Missouri in Warrensburg, Foran earned a Bachelor of Science degree in biology, with an emphasis in conservation enforcement, in 2015.

As was the case with her peers, her willingness to volunteer opened doors. One of her first gigs was serving as a Protection Division volunteer in the St. Louis, Kansas City, and Central regions. Ultimately, she logged 1,000 hours as a volunteer.

Subsequently, she was hired for part-time positions in MDC's Forestry and Wildlife divisions. As a Forestry Division

**Sarah Foran conducts a Telecheck entry during the alternative methods portion of the 2017 firearms deer season.**



employee near Warrenton, she joined one of the crews, eradicating invasive species and mowing fields. Later, with the Wildlife Division near Elsberry, she helped maintain MDC areas by patrolling for litter, wielding a chainsaw to clear hiking trails, and administering 3 a.m. duck-hunting draws.

The youngest of four children and the first to graduate from college, Foran said her family — who encouraged her to hunt and fish — always supported her dream. But she knew from the beginning it wouldn't be easy.

"I knew I would have to do more than just get a degree. It takes good interpersonal skills and field experience," she said. "But you have to fight for what you want."





Foran applied to the academy twice; she was accepted on her second attempt.

"My mom knew I was headstrong," she said. "And my dad is excited to say, 'My daughter is a game warden.'"

## Whatever it Takes

Crystal Poole can't remember a time when she wasn't interested in conservation.

"I couldn't even tell you when it started," she said. "It's been a lifelong ambition. This is what I've always wanted to do. Since I was a little kid, becoming a conservation agent has always stuck with me."

As a college student, she explored the possibility of joining the military or law enforcement. But she always felt a career in conservation was her first and best love.

In college, she signed up for any training she thought might facilitate an outdoorsy career. She's versed in geographic information systems. She is dive-certified. She knows how to immobilize an animal with a dart gun.

And, like Foran, Poole took a part-time job with MDC's Wildlife Division, helping out at Pony Express Conservation Area.

Poole, now 23, had to overcome some skepticism. Her father was supportive of his daughter going into law enforcement or the military, but he worried the MDC hiring process would prove too competitive.

"He wanted me to have a backup plan," she said. "So I took animal physiology and some other veterinary classes so I could apply to vet school."

But she didn't give up. Instead, Poole interned with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, trudging around in waders in the

summer heat at Loess Bluffs National Wildlife Refuge in search of rare Blanding's turtles. She pursued her own scientific inquiries, as well. "I set up my own study to trap flying squirrels," Poole explained.

Speaking to women who want to pursue a career with MDC's Protection Division, Poole said building your resume as much as you can helps.

She encourages any young women interested in the profession to volunteer with conservation groups and apply to work part time for MDC.

## A Love of Community Law Enforcement

Unlike Foran and Poole, Hayley Honeycutt came to her decision to apply for a conservation job later in life. She tried her hand at a few different jobs — working in a sawmill and as a mechanic and raising beef cattle — before settling into her current career path.

While studying agriculture at Missouri State University, Honeycutt — for fun — participated in ride-alongs with the Mountain View Police Department.

"I just absolutely loved it," she said.

The experience galvanized her to join the Mountain View Police, where she worked three years. Surfing the internet one day, Honeycutt came across the application requirements for a conservation agent's job. With an agriculture degree and a background in law enforcement, she knew she had a chance.

"It was serendipitous. It all fell into place. God set me on a path I knew I needed to take," she said.

For Honeycutt, being a conservation agent offers many more opportunities to interact with the community in a positive way. As a small-town police officer, she spent most of

Crystal Poole patrols Caldwell County's rural routes on a wintery day. With 430 square miles of land, but fewer than 10,000 residents, Caldwell is a wildlife haven.







Professional and friendly, Hayley Honeycutt ensures duck hunters at Wappapello Lake comply with Missouri's waterfowl regulations.

her time investigating incidents and writing reports. It was sometimes difficult to overcome many residents' negative perceptions of police.

"As a conservation agent, I can be proactive. I like to build relationships with people," she said. "I enjoy educating students in the schools and teaching hunter education courses."

Although comfortable in the role of enforcing the *Code*, Honeycutt is excited to move into a role where she can build a rapport with people in her community.

## One Job, One Standard

All three women stressed the fact that the standards for men and women in the program are exactly the same. All the requirements — physical and mental — are the same for both sexes.

"I never felt like I should be treated any differently, and they don't treat us any differently," Foran said.

"We don't need to be coddled," Honeycutt added. "We have to be able to make good decisions. We can't be out there, doubting ourselves."

And the women showed they could be successful leaders. Honeycutt was selected by her peers to be the class president, and Poole won the trap-shoot contest. All three women passed the Evasive Vehicle Operation course on the first try.

From Monday through Friday, students live in housing they share with Missouri Highway Patrol candidates. The experience is much like that in a military boot camp, where recruits eat, work, exercise, and study together nonstop.

It's tough. It's meant to be.

"There's a TV there, but we never watched it," Poole said.

"We were so exhausted," Honeycutt admitted. "There was always a test to take, always something we had to do."

The experience is challenging, but it's intended to instill an *esprit de corps*, Yamnitz said.

"We need people who have a desire to do the job and meet the qualifications," he said, noting the requirements are the same for every candidate. "It's one job, one standard."

By the time it's over, the candidates often feel like family. The men and women joke like siblings, but they've forged lasting friendships marked by appreciation, mutual respect, and support.

"We've really grown close as a group," Foran said. ▲

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*Kristie Hilgedick serves on MDC's communications team. She enjoys traveling to new places and spending time outdoors.*



The journey isn't over — 14 agents graduated from MDC's training academy in October, but they still must complete six months of training under the supervision of more-experienced agents.



# Get Outside

in MARCH →

Ways to connect with nature



## SOUTHEAST REGION

### Native Plant Seminar

Saturday, March 10 • 8 a.m.-2:30 p.m.  
Cape Girardeau Conservation Nature Center  
2289 County Park Drive, Cape Girardeau, MO 63701  
Registration required, call 573-290-5218 for information  
Ages 14 and older

Workshop will include information on naturescaping, propagating native plants, creating a wildlife habitat, and the importance of pollinators. Gardeners and property owners alike will learn how to create a better habitat for wildlife.



Monarch caterpillar on butterfly weed

### Nature's Drumline

Pileated woodpeckers will be working on their drum solos this month as they hammer away at nearby trees, establishing territories.

### Take A Hike

March is the perfect time to walk along your favorite trail and enjoy the sights and sounds of spring. Visit [mdc.mo.gov/field-guide](http://mdc.mo.gov/field-guide) before you head out to learn more about the flowers, trees, and animals you'll discover along the way.

### Turtle Power

With the warmer weather, turtles become active in late March. Watch for them as you become more active, too.



Three-toed box turtle

#### Natural Events to See This Month

Here's what's going on in the natural world.



Ducks and geese migrate through mid-April



Harbinger of spring is blooming



Barred owls are nesting



## Downy Baby Eagles

Keep your eyes trained on those huge **bald eagle nests** perched high in the treetops. There, you might catch a glimpse of bald eagle chicks as they begin to hatch.



## SIGHT IN FOR **TURKEY** SEASON

Don't wait! Now is the time to head to one of MDC's five **shooting range and outdoor education centers** to sharpen your skills and sight in your scope for spring turkey season.

- 1 **Andy Dalton — Ash Grove**  
[mdc.mo.gov/andydalton](http://mdc.mo.gov/andydalton)
- 2 **Lake City — Buckner**  
[mdc.mo.gov/lakecity](http://mdc.mo.gov/lakecity)
- 3 **Jay Henges — High Ridge**  
[mdc.mo.gov/hengesrange](http://mdc.mo.gov/hengesrange)
- 4 **Parma Woods — Parkville**  
[mdc.mo.gov/parmawoods](http://mdc.mo.gov/parmawoods)
- 5 **August A. Busch — Weldon Spring**  
[mdc.mo.gov/buschrage](http://mdc.mo.gov/buschrage)



### ST. LOUIS REGION

## Wildlife: Timberdoodles and Spring Peepers

Saturday, March 17 • 6-9:30 p.m.  
August A. Busch Conservation Area  
2360 Hwy D, St. Charles, MO 63304  
Registration required, call 636-441-4554 by March 16  
All ages

Witness a nature show that belongs to one of the strangest members of the bird world, the timberdoodle. Also look and listen for one of the loudest singers of the amphibian world, the spring peeper.



## Not a turkey hunter, but want to learn?

Our staff of specialists can help you master firearms and archery, wildlife identification, and many other outdoor skills. Visit [mdc.mo.gov/shootingranges](http://mdc.mo.gov/shootingranges) to learn more.



Ticks appear



Zebra swallowtail butterflies fly in woodlands



# Places to Go

## SOUTHWEST REGION

### Barclay Conservation Area

Waters for recreation and contemplation

by Larry Archer

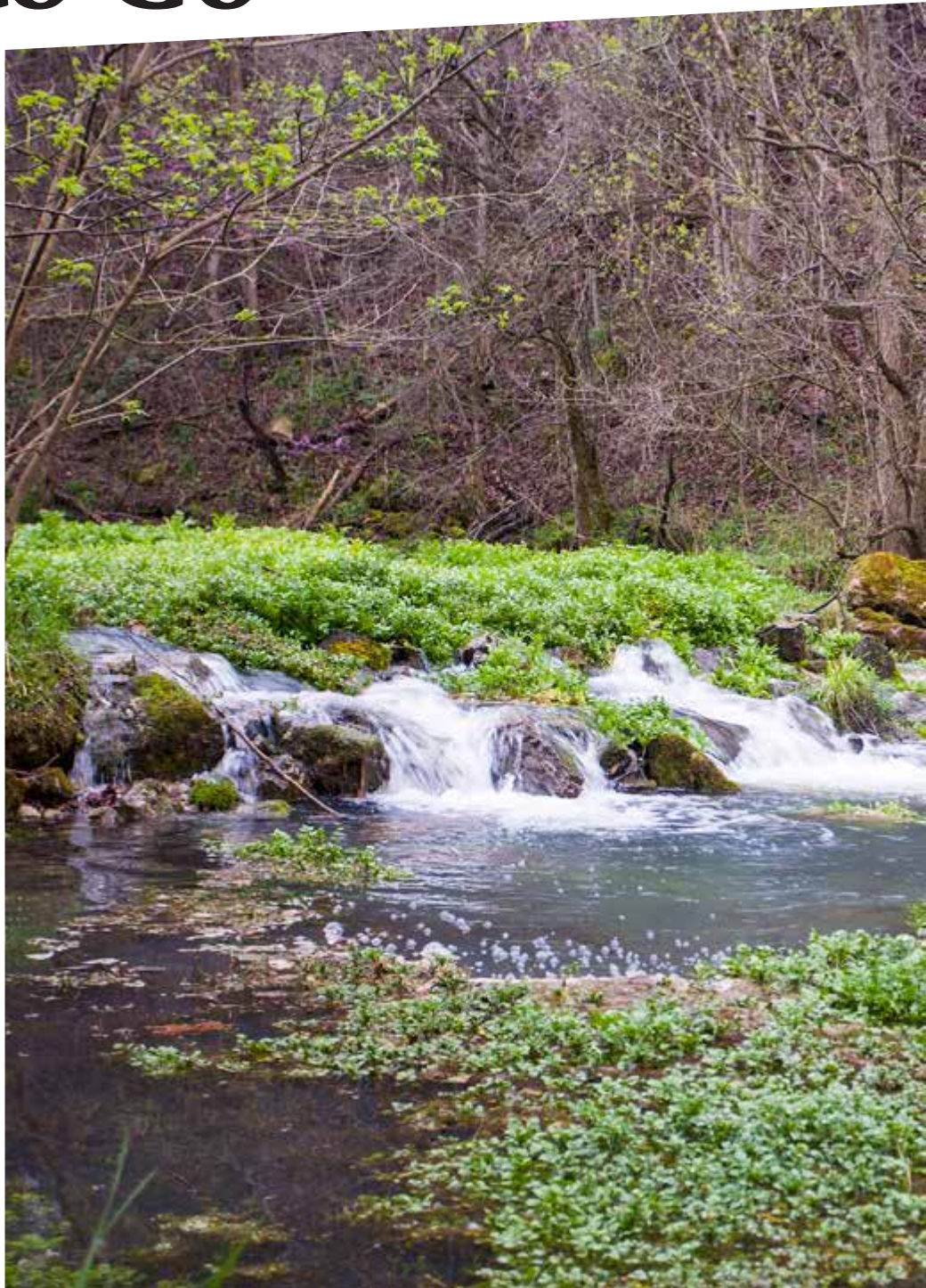
✳ **Recreationally speaking,** Barclay Conservation Area (CA), located 40 miles south of the Lake of the Ozarks in Dallas County, really punches above its weight.

At 426 acres, this conservation area is something of a lightweight, but, acre for acre, it holds its own against many of MDC's much larger properties. With more than a mile and a half of Niangua River frontage in a White Ribbon Trout Area, boat ramp, canoe launch, and a prime spot in a National Audubon Society Important Birding Area, Barclay CA has plenty to keep anglers, floaters, birders, and hikers occupied.

The list of those taking advantage of the area's recreational opportunities extends beyond the traditional to some of nature's most fun-loving furbearers, according to Steven LaVal, resource forester and Barclay CA's manager.

"It's not uncommon to see otters at the boat ramp in the evening," LaVal said. "There's a family of otters that lives somewhere right there, so a lot of people see them."

If the Niangua River is all about recreation, then Barclay Spring is all about contemplation. With a daily output of nearly 5 million gallons, the spring's rushing waters provide those wishing to slow down a natural soundtrack for relaxation and meditation.



"In March, there'll still be eagles. There's always some eagles hanging around because it's close to the river. By then, you might also hear some turkey gobble or hear some quail whistle."

—Barclay Conservation Area Manager Steven LaVal

**WHAT  
TO  
LOOK  
FOR  
WHEN  
YOU  
VISIT**



North American river otter





Barclay Spring produces nearly 5 million gallons of water daily, which eventually makes its way to the Niangua River.



## BARCLAY CONSERVATION AREA

consists of 426 acres in Dallas County. From Bennett Spring State Park, take Highway 64 west 3.70 miles, then Corkery Road north 3 miles, then Barclay Springs Road east.

N37° 47' 13.6104" | W92° 51' 45.5616"

[short.mdc.mo.gov/ZSw](http://short.mdc.mo.gov/ZSw) 417-532-7612

### WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU VISIT



**Bird-Watching** Included in the National Audubon Society's Niangua River Watershed Important Bird Area. The eBird list of birds recorded at Barclay CA is available at [short.mdc.mo.gov/Z5F](http://short.mdc.mo.gov/Z5F).



**Canoeing/Floating** Includes both a concrete boat ramp and a gravel bar access canoe launch.



**Fishing** Trout (good — White Ribbon Trout Area, see regulations), bass (good), sunfish (good), and suckers (good).



**Hiking** No designated trails.



#### Hunting

**Deer** (good) and **turkey** (good). Deer and turkey regulations are subject to annual changes. Please refer to the *Spring Turkey* or *Fall Deer and Turkey* booklets for current regulations.

**Rabbit** (fair).

**Squirrel** (fair).



**Trapping** Special use permit required.



Great blue  
heron



Spring peeper



Copperhead



Turkey vulture



Raccoon





## Spring Beauty *Claytonia virginica*

Status	Size	Distribution
Common	About 5 inches during flowering	Statewide

**T**his well-named plant provides a bounty of beauty in the woods as well as in open areas and yards. Found, often in abundance, in open woods, fields, valleys, suburban lawns, and sometimes rocky ledges, this is Missouri's most widely distributed early spring flower.



### Did You Know?

Native Americans were the original locavores, or wild-foods enthusiasts. They knew the value of spring beauties for their potato-like corms and edible leaves.



### LIFE CYCLE

Spring beauties bloom from February through May. Stalks bear several flowers branching from the main stem.



### ECOSYSTEM CONNECTIONS

Early spring risers like spring beauties offer a welcome dietary boost for many animals, from insects to birds to mammals.



# Outdoor Calendar

❖ MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION ❖

## FISHING

### Black Bass

Impounded waters and non-Ozark streams:  
Open all year

### Bullfrogs, Green Frogs

June 30 at sunset-Oct. 31, 2018

### Nongame Fish Gigging

Impounded Waters, sunrise to sunset:  
Feb. 1-Sept. 14, 2018

### Paddlefish

Statewide:  
March 15-April 30, 2018

On the Mississippi River:

March 15-May 15, 2018  
Sept. 15-Dec. 15, 2018

### Trout Parks

Catch-and-Keep:  
March 1-Oct. 31, 2018

### Spring Turkey Season

Spring turkey hunting youth weekend is April 7 and 8, with the regular spring season running April 16 through May 6. Find detailed information in the *2018 Spring Turkey Hunting Regulations and Information* booklet, available where permits are sold and online at [short.mdc.mo.gov/ZT6](http://short.mdc.mo.gov/ZT6).



## Free MO Hunting and MO Fishing Apps

MO Hunting makes it easy to buy permits, electronically notch them, and Telecheck your harvest. MO Fishing lets you buy permits, find great places to fish, and ID your catch. Get both in Android or iPhone platforms at [short.mdc.mo.gov/Zi2](http://short.mdc.mo.gov/Zi2).

## HUNTING

### Bullfrogs, Green Frogs

June 30 at sunset-Oct. 31, 2018

### Coyote

*Restrictions apply during April, spring turkey season, and firearms deer season.*

Open all year

### Crow

Nov. 1, 2018-March 3, 2019

### Deer

Archery:

Sept. 15-Nov. 9, 2018

Nov. 21, 2018-Jan. 15, 2019

Firearms:

- ▶ Early Youth Portion (ages 6-15):  
Oct. 27-28, 2018
- ▶ November Portion:  
Nov. 10-20, 2018
- ▶ Late Youth Portion (ages 6-15):  
Nov. 23-25, 2018
- ▶ Antlerless Portion (open areas only):  
Nov. 30-Dec. 2, 2018
- ▶ Alternative Methods Portion:  
Dec. 22, 2018-Jan. 1, 2019

### Groundhog (woodchuck)

May 7-Dec. 15, 2018

### Pheasant

Youth (ages 6-15):

Oct. 27-Oct. 28, 2018

Regular:

Nov. 1, 2018-Jan. 15, 2019

### Quail

Youth (ages 6-15):

Oct. 27-Oct. 28, 2018

Regular:

Nov. 1, 2018-Jan. 15, 2019

### Rabbit

Oct. 1, 2018-Feb. 15, 2019

### Squirrel

May 26, 2018-Feb. 15, 2019

### Turkey

Archery:

Sept. 15-Nov. 9, 2018

Nov. 21, 2018-Jan. 15, 2019

Firearms:

- ▶ Youth (ages 6-15): April 7-8, 2018
- ▶ Spring: April 16-May 6, 2018
- ▶ Fall: Oct. 1-31, 2018

### Waterfowl

See the *Waterfowl Hunting Digest* or visit [short.mdc.mo.gov/ZZx](http://short.mdc.mo.gov/ZZx) for more information.

## TRAPPING

### Beaver, Nutria

Nov. 15, 2017-March 31, 2018



For complete information about seasons, limits, methods, and restrictions, consult the *Wildlife Code of Missouri* at [short.mdc.mo.gov/Zib](http://short.mdc.mo.gov/Zib). Current hunting, trapping, and fishing regulation booklets are available from local permit vendors or online at [short.mdc.mo.gov/ZZf](http://short.mdc.mo.gov/ZZf).

ILLUSTRATION: MARK RATHIEL





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on Instagram**

@moconservation

Discover the bald eagle, like this one hovering over a pond at Eagle Bluffs Conservation Area. Spring is a great time to see the majestic birds or view their massive nests from the road. Find more to explore at a conservation area near you. Visit [mdc.mo.gov/atlas](https://mdc.mo.gov/atlas).

📷 by **Noppadol Paothong**